between the lines

A lesson written for every student in the room

FREE LESSON SAMPLER

Dickens's London: Oliver Twist: Asking for more

Why does asking for more cause such horror?

Lesson 4 of 14 from the scheme of learning

Teacher notes, slides and student pages at all three levels

Written for the English national curriculum at Key Stage 3



© 2026 Between the Lines. This sampler is free to use and print in your school. Please share the link to our website instead of the file.

What is in this sampler

This is one complete lesson from our Dickens's London: Oliver Twist scheme for Year 7. It comes exactly as it appears in the full scheme, so you can teach it next week and see how our lessons work.

Teacher notes	Timings with slide numbers, Do Now answers, the exploded quotation, the hinge question and what each answer tells you, the task at three levels, a model and notes on misconceptions and adapting the lesson (next pages).
Slides	The editable PowerPoint deck for Lesson 4, with teacher notes on every slide (separate file).
Student pages	The lesson's pages from the student booklet: one question, with the Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support side by side (at the end of this document).

How every lesson works

Know	Do Now from memory, vocabulary, then the reading. The five Do Now questions build on what students learned in Lessons 1 to 3 of the full scheme.
Apply	Explode one quotation together; a hinge question checks understanding.
Master	One shared task, with Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support; then a model and an exit ticket. Most Master tasks are What–How–Why paragraphs, and some are creative or other forms: in this lesson, a diary entry.

Three levels of support

Every student answers the same question in every lesson. What changes is the support on the page, so the whole class does the same lesson:

Securing	The most support: a word bank, a choice of quotations, a worked example and sentence starters.
Strengthening	Some support: prompts for What, How and Why, a planner and a checklist.
Soaring	The most challenge: a debatable statement, prompts to think further and an argument planner.

The names describe the support, never the student. The hinge question shows who might start where, and students move between levels from lesson to lesson.

© 2026 Between the Lines · Free to use and print in your school

In the full scheme

- 14 lessons like this one, with editable slides and a teacher handbook (lesson notes, unit map, assessment guide and knowledge bank)
- A student booklet with every lesson and all three levels of support, plus the same lessons as one pack per level
- Six weeks of independent practice homework at three levels
- A checkpoint (Feedback Loop kit) with a whole-class feedback sheet and improvement tasks
- A two-part end-of-unit assessment with a teacher guide, band guidance and annotated models
- A catch-up sheet for every lesson, for students who missed it
- An inclusion guide: pre-teaching, SEND, EAL and pupil premium notes for every lesson

© 2026 Between the Lines · Free to use and print in your school

Lesson 4: Asking for more

SEQUENCE 1: THE WORKHOUSE AND THE UNDERTAKER'S: CHAPTERS 1 TO 7 · 60 MINUTES

Why does asking for more cause such horror?

By the end of the lesson, students can

- Explain why Oliver's request for more is a shock to the adults
- Identify how Dickens uses grand language for a small, polite request
- Write a diary entry from the view of another boy in the hall

Lesson at a glance

Time	Phase	What happens	Slides
0–8	Know	Do Now: five quick questions on Lessons 1 and 3. Students check their answers from the answer slide.	2–3
8–20	Know	Pre-teach "gruel", "satire" and "rebel". Sum up the lead-up (the stone hall, one bowl each, the lots), then read the extract aloud while students follow.	4–6
20–30	Apply	Explode the quotation together. Think aloud about how polite and short Oliver's request is, then students annotate their copy. Before you reveal any notes, students try the four empty boxes on the first explode slide, on their own or after you model one box.	7–8
30–35	Apply	Hinge question on mini-whiteboards. Use the answers to decide who starts on which level of support.	9–10
35–53	Master	Students write the diary entry of another boy in the hall, using their level of support in the student booklet. Share the model diary entry in the last five minutes.	11–12
53–60	Master	Exit ticket. Collect and sort into three piles to plan the start of the next lesson.	13

Do Now answers

1	What is irony?	Saying the opposite of what you mean
2	The narrator calls Mrs Mann "the good lady of the house". What does he really mean?	She is not good: she is cruel
3	Why was workhouse life made harsh on purpose?	So only the most desperate people would ask for help
4	Which law of 1834 said poor people should get help inside a workhouse?	The Poor Law Amendment Act, or the new Poor Law
5	What job did Dickens do at twelve?	He stuck labels on pots of boot blacking

Vocabulary

gruel	a thin, watery porridge, often the main food in a workhouse
satire	writing that mocks something to show it is wrong
rebel	a person who stands up against those in charge

© 2026 Between the Lines · Free to use and print in your school

Reading

Chapter 2: Asking for more

The boys eat in a stone hall, and each boy gets one bowl of gruel and no more. After months of hunger, they draw lots to choose who will ask for more, and the lot falls to Oliver.

> The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered each other, and winked at Oliver; while his next neighbors nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own temerity:
>
> "Please, sir, I want some more."
>
> The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear.

Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist (1838), Chapter 2

Word help **copper**: a large metal pot used for cooking · **short commons**: very little food · **temerity**: boldness · **stupefied**: too shocked to think

Explode the quotation

Method	Zoom in
Direct speech. Oliver's request is short, simple and polite.	The polite word "Please" and the title "sir" show that Oliver means no harm.

"Please, sir, I want some more."

Effect	Purpose
Readers feel how small the request is and how great the adults' horror is, so the adults look foolish.	Dickens turns a simple request for food into a rebellion, to criticise a system that starves children.

Hinge question

The master "turned very pale" when Oliver asked for more. Why?

A. He is ill from the smell of the gruel.

B. No boy has ever dared to ask for more. (the right answer)

C. He has run out of gruel.

What the answers tell you

A is a guess that ignores the text: ask where the extract shows why he reacts. C is a literal reading: ask who has been served. These may be the students who start on Securing.

Why the answer is right

No boy has asked before, so the master is as shocked as if Oliver had done something terrible.

© 2026 Between the Lines · Free to use and print in your school

Master task: diary entry

That night, another boy in the hall writes about what happened. Write his diary entry, using at least two exact details from the scene.

Securing the most support

A frame for each part of the entry, quotations to choose from and a word bank.

"desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery"

"the small rebel"

"the boys with fear"

Strengthening some support

Prompts for each part of the entry and a success checklist.

Describe the hall and the gruel as the boy saw them

Describe what Oliver did and said, using exact words from the scene

Show how the master and the other boys reacted

End with what the boy fears or hopes will happen next

Soaring the most challenge

Write the diary entry so that the boy tries to copy the narrator's grand, solemn tone, and his plain feelings keep breaking through.

Model diary entry

Tuesday night

I am writing this under my blanket, because I still cannot believe what I saw. At supper the master stood at the copper, as always, and we had our one bowl each. It was gone in a minute. It is always gone in a minute.

Tonight, though, Oliver Twist stood up with his basin and spoon in his hand. We had cast lots, and the lot fell to him. His legs were shaking, but he walked right up to the master and said, "Please, sir, I want some more."

I thought the master would shout. Instead he turned "very pale". He stared at Oliver as if a ghost had spoken, and then he held on to the copper like a man about to fall. Even the assistants could not move. Then he hit Oliver with the ladle and screamed for Mr Bumble.

I feel ashamed that I let Oliver go alone, and proud of him too. All he asked for was a little more food. Why is that a crime?

Tomorrow I will watch the gate. I do not know what they will do to him.

What makes it work

- Two exact details from the scene are built into the boy's own sentences
- Shows his feelings through what he notices, such as the master holding on to the copper
- Puts Dickens's point in a boy's voice: a small, polite request is treated as a crime

Exit ticket

Asking for more causes such horror because…

Teacher notes

Subject knowledge

The narrator describes a hungry boy's request in the language of battle and crime: "the small rebel", "temerity", "Horror was depicted on every countenance". The joke is that adults treat a request for food as an uprising. A nine-year-old with a bowl, a master with a ladle and a board in a solemn meeting show how far apart the two worlds are. The board's "That boy will be hung" is funny and chilling at once. Oliver's words stay plain; the adults' words are grand.

© 2026 Between the Lines · Free to use and print in your school